



All Yonkers Public Schools Return to Learn In School 4 Days a Week Starting on Monday, April 12, 2021 for Current Hybrid Students

Message from Dr. Edwin M. Quezada, Superintendent of Schools to the Yonkers Public Schools Learning Community

"You build trust with others each time you choose integrity over image, truth over convenience, or honor over personal gain." John C. Maxwell

Our District is about to begin an important next step for our students' education. On March 17, 2021, the Board of Education Trustees, adopted Resolution 11.2 to amend the 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan Addendum to Appendix 6: Teaching and Learning (August 20, 2020) to provide 4 days a week of in school instruction for all current Hybrid students starting on or about April 6, 2021. School districts across Westchester County have responded similarly. **Yonkers Public Schools are prepared to bring all current Hybrid students to school for 4 days of instruction beginning April 12, 2021.**

Transitioning to four days a week of in-person instruction will require the collaboration of every Yonkers Public Schools stakeholder. The safety and well-being of all students, their families and all our staff are the drivers of our decision-making and ultimately our success. Our work will be accomplished by rigorously following all current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), State and County Departments of Health (DOH) and New York State Education Department (NYSED) guidance.

All school operations will follow:

- 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan approved by NYSED July 31, 2020
- Addendum to Appendix 6: Teaching and Learning - Daily Instruction - Revision August 20, 2020
- Addendum to Appendix 6: Teaching and Learning - Return to Learn 4 Days of In-Person Instruction - Revision March 17, 2021
- COVID-19 Contact Tracing protocols approved by CDC and DOH

The health, well-being and safety of everyone in the learning community depends on the actions of all adults. Parents/guardians MUST keep children home when they are not feeling well OR when a household member has tested COVID-19 positive OR the household member is waiting for test results OR has recently been exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual. Staff members must not report to work when exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms or subject to a precautionary or mandatory order of quarantine.

To prepare for a smooth transition on Monday, April 12, the following are important facts and expectations.

IMPORTANT FACTS

Which students will be in school 4 days a week?

- **Current Hybrid students in Groups/Cohorts A and B** will attend in school Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. The combined students will be known as **Cohort/Group E**.
- **Cohort/Group C**, self-contained Special Education students, no change in their schedule, students will continue to attend in school Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Is Flex Day Wellness Wednesday in the weekly schedule? Yes!

There is no change for Flex Day Wellness Wednesdays, 100% Online Remote Instruction for all students in Groups/Cohorts E, C and D; except for a half-day of in school instruction for students in Integrated CoTeaching (ICT) programs and selected multilingual learners.



Will the daily health screening continue and be enforced? Yes!

- Daily Student and Staff Attestation Forms MUST be submitted.
- Attestation Forms and body-temperature screening will be completed for every person entering District facilities.
- Face Coverings must be worn by EVERYONE - students and staff - while in school, except for those students for whom mask wearing is developmentally inappropriate or have medical exceptions.
- Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers and activities involving external groups or organizations.
- Contact tracing, isolation and quarantine protocols will be adhered to with fidelity as required by CDC and DOH protocols.

Will voluntary COVID-19 screening testing be available in school? Yes!

To further support the successful return to 4 days of in-person instruction and help diminish community transmission, the District collaborated with the New York State Department of Health to provide COVID-19 rapid screening testing in schools using the [BinaxNOW™ COVID-19 Ag Card](#).

Students with parental approval and staff may volunteer to be screened at school. The weekly goal is to conduct up to 20% COVID-19 rapid screening tests on eligible adults and students in schools across the district. Adults who are not fully vaccinated or who have not tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days, may voluntarily participate in screening testing. Adults who are fully vaccinated or any person who was COVID-19 positive in the last 90 days will not be tested.

Parents of students and staff must complete the District's consent form. All results are confidential. Positive screening test results are required to be reported to the NYS DOH.

Yellow school bus transportation, what you need to know.

- Bus capacity will continue to be restricted to 50%.
- Face coverings are required for everyone on the bus.
- Transportation companies will ensure windows are opened prior to students boarding the bus.
- Required daily cleaning of buses will continue.
- Children's bus company and AM pick up and PM drop off may change. Prior to April 12, the Transportation Department will provide information to families whose child is eligible for transportation.

Will school halls and auditoriums look different? No!

- Physical distancing will be enforced, as practical, pursuant to CDC and DOH guidelines.

Will school and classroom cleaning continue daily? Yes!

- [Cleaning protocols](#) will continue to be followed as recommended by NYSED and the CDC, especially for frequently touched surfaces.

Will classrooms look different? Yes!

- Desktop barriers, although not required, will be installed on the desk/table of every student where 6 feet of physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Current NYSED and CDC guidance allows for desks to be 3 feet apart.
- Windows will be open in every classroom, where available, to increase circulation of outdoor air.
- Classroom layouts may be modified to maximize physical distancing.
- Ventilation systems in all schools are functioning as designed.

Where will students eat lunch?

School principals determine whether student lunch is provided in the cafeteria or classrooms.

- ALL protocols for cleaning and social distancing currently established in school will continue.

Are there any changes for Cohort/Group D 100% Remote Instruction Students? No!

Students currently participating in 100% Remote Instruction will continue their classwork following the weekly schedule in [Addendum to Appendix 6 dated March 17, 2021](#).

Families interested in returning to in-person instruction must submit their child's name to their Principal. The Principal and central office administration will determine if and when the student may be permitted to return to in-person instruction. This will be considered in cases where the in-person attendance for Cohort/Group E is less than what can be physically accommodated in classroom spaces, and if parents/caregivers have previously expressed interest to switch their child(ren) from Remote Instruction (Cohort D) through the Return to Learn Campaigns.

EXPECTATIONS

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- Maintain open communication with teachers and school personnel.
- *Keep children home* when they are not feeling well, OR when a household member has tested positive for COVID-19 OR is waiting for test results, OR has recently been exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual.
- Conduct health screening of their children prior to sending them to school.
- Complete the COVID-19 daily Student Attestation form.
- Report when the child or anyone in the household has tested positive for COVID-19 to the school principal or nurse or the District's Health Services department.
- Send children to school with a proper mask or face covering. Ensure that children wear their mask or face covering at all times.
- Avoid large gatherings with families and friends.
- Limit interaction with non-household members.
- Adhere to all CDC and DOH guidance.

Parents/guardians are being asked to consider voluntarily allowing their children to participate in the District COVID-19 Screening Testing Program.

District and School Staff are expected to:

- Thoroughly be familiar with the District's Reopening Plan and all addendums.
- Strictly adhere to CDC and DOH protocols.
- Accurately complete the daily Staff Attestation form.
- Not report to work if:
 - exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, or
 - subject to a precautionary or mandatory order of quarantine.
- Always wear a mask at all times when interacting with others.
- Maintain 6 feet physical distancing at all times, staff to staff and staff to student, pursuant to CDC guidelines.
- Limit socializing with adults in the learning community unless you are part of a team servicing specific students.
- Ensure that classroom spaces are set up to support students' needs.
- Ensure student desks face in the same direction, where possible.
- Remove nonessential furniture from classrooms.
- Strictly adhere to Governor's Executive Orders and DOH guidance.

Staff are being asked to voluntarily participate in the District's COVID-19 Screening Testing Program.



What you need to know about COVID-19 Isolation, Quarantining and School Closure.

Following Westchester County Department of Health Contact Tracing protocols:

- **Isolation** for 10 days is required for anyone who tests positive for COVID-19.
- **Quarantining** is determined by the District's Medical Staff in consultation with the County DOH.
- **School Closure** is determined by the Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with District Medical Staff and County DOH. There are three primary factors that drive the decision to close a school:
 - Number of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19; this will vary in every incident.
 - Potential community transmission.
 - Number of adults required to quarantine, which would impact a school's ability to ensure sufficient personnel are in school for instruction and supervision.

Essential Elements for Success to Return to Learn In School 4 Days a Week

- ✓ Trust
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Honesty
- ✓ Focus on Students' Success
- ✓ Commitment to the Health and Well-being of every individual in our schools
- ✓ Commitment to Quality Education
- ✓ Commitment to the Community We Serve

"...keeping schools closed or even partially closed, based on what we know is unwarranted, is harming children, and has become a human rights issue,"

[Keeping schools closed or even partially closed, based on what we know now, is harming children.](#)

Dr. Tara O. Henderson, Dr. Monica Gandhi, Dr. Tracy Beth Hoeg, Dr. Daniel Johnson - USA Today (March 9, 2021)